

**MUNDO
OBRERO**

Otro regalo
para los ricos 12

**PROTESTERS
TELL MICH. GOV.**

'Moratorium now!' 4

**14 YEARS
AFTER NAFTA**

Mexicans demand repeal 9



**MUMIA
ABU-JAMAL on:**
*Reclaiming Dr. King's
legacy* 6

**LGBTQ YOUTH
OF COLOR**

Fight for community
development 3

**Super
Tuesday**

EDIT 10

WW IN 1963

Kennedy assassination
& Warren Commission 10



To protect profits

Bosses begin wide layoffs

By Jaimeson Champion

The report released by the U.S. Department of Labor Feb. 1 detailed a trend that many workers are already painfully well aware of. The capitalist bosses are cutting jobs and slashing payrolls, with a greater intensity, across nearly every sector of the U.S. economy.

The report disclosed a net loss of more than 17,000 jobs in the month of January. Small gains in low paying service sector and retail jobs were swamped by massive cuts in relatively better paid sectors such as construction and manufacturing. More than 28,000 construction workers and more than 27,000 manufacturing workers were laid off this past month, according to the Labor Department's figures.

And the number of workers who have been unemployed for six months or longer has now reached nearly 1.4 million.

The numbers in this report are grim indeed, but the government's tallies only represent a fraction of the actual number of layoffs that are taking place, and only offer a small snapshot of the growing number of unemployed workers in the U.S.

Many of the job cuts that are currently happening in industries such as construction and manufacturing are being targeted at undocumented workers whom the Labor Department does not include in its figures.

Millions of workers across the country are not counted in the official unemployment figures because the government claims they aren't "actively seeking employment." As chronic unemployment increases, more and more workers are failing to meet the government's criteria for active job seekers, and are categorized as having "dropped out of the labor market." The so-called official unemployment rate of 4.9 percent does not take any of these unemployed workers into account.

The workers that are being laid off are victims of the escalating war that the capitalist class is waging against the working class and oppressed. As the effects of the plummeting U.S. housing market and the chaos in global financial markets continue to wreak havoc on the capitalists' profits, they are responding by intensifying their attacks on the workers and oppressed with

mass layoffs, wage cuts, and the slashing of workers' hours.

The massive layoffs and wage cuts benefit the capitalist class by reducing their labor costs during the economic downturn. The growth in the reserve army of unemployed workers benefits the capitalist class by lowering the wages that workers command in the labor markets. With more and more workers being forced to compete for fewer and fewer jobs, wages are driven down across the board.

As the job cuts continue to intensify, and the ranks of the unemployed continue to grow, the anger and discontent of the working class is growing in proportion. The capitalist ruling class is constantly attempting to neutralize this growing anger and discontent by pitting worker against worker.

Through deliberate and calculated campaigns of disinformation and racist demagoguery, the ruling class seeks to divide the working class. Racist blowhards like Lou Dobbs are paid by the ruling class to spout their vile nonsense, while the millionaire politicians vying for the 2008 presidential nomination promise to "stop the flight of our jobs overseas." By telling workers that they are being laid off because their jobs are being stolen by workers overseas, or that they can't find a job because immigrant workers have taken the jobs, the ruling class seeks to spread racism and have workers fight amongst themselves.

But these racist ruling class tactics are being challenged. Across the U.S., a growing number of workers are uniting to struggle against the real enemy, the capitalist ruling class. More and more workers are uniting to say that it is not the oppressed workers in developing countries who are taking their jobs. Rather, it is the greedy capitalist bosses and bankers who are cutting jobs and foreclosing on homes in efforts to save their own profits.

Any meaningful change in the lives of workers is dependent on the growth of this solidarity among members of the multinational working class. The ruling class trembles with fear at the thought of millions of workers united in a fight to replace the system of capitalist exploitation with socialism—a system that meets human needs, not the bosses' greed. It won't be long before the capitalists' worst fears become reality. □

Movement says, 'racist, sexist DA, go away'

Activists in Houston mobilize against District Attorney Chuck Rosenthal on Jan. 31.
Read article on page 7.



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How imperialism removed malaria from the developed world

By G. Dunkel

Malaria and imperialism: A Review of “The Making of a Tropical Disease: A Short History of Malaria” by Randall M. Packard (Johns Hopkins Biographies of Disease).

As the 19th century drew to a close, scientists began to figure out the life cycle of the malarial parasite and its relation to anopheles mosquitoes. This knowledge became a weapon in interimperialist competition, as well as a tool to eradicate malaria.

While French scientists were active in investigating malaria, French policymakers didn’t use the developing prophylactics—mainly quinine—for their troops in malarial areas until after World War II. (See “Malaria & French Imperialism” in the Journal of African History, 1983.) Even though most of these troops were drawn from areas of the French empire outside the metropole, many of these troops had no or a very limited exposure to malaria, and so suffered tremendously when they were exposed to it. Some military units in Africa in the 1880s had mortality rates as high as 800 per 1,000.

French imperialism had the first concession to build the Panama Canal. After an attempt, the French withdrew in 1888 after 20,000-25,000 of their workers died. Financial backers grew leery of pouring money into a project that might never be completed because workers on the project were dying instead of working.

Packard tells how the United States was able to step in a few years later and successfully complete the canal. U.S. managers used what had been learned from eliminating malaria and yellow fever in Havana, during the time U.S. imperialism occupied Cuba after the 1898 Spanish-American War.

The limitations of Packard’s approach to the connection between malaria and colonialism can be seen in his chapter on “Tropical Development and Malaria,” in which he looks at Brazil, South Africa and India at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. Each history is fascinating and richly detailed but he fails to say directly that U.S. and European imperialism imposed the “patterns of economic development” in these three regions.

Packard just concludes: “Patterns of economic development linked to agricultural expansion prevented farmers in these regions from growing out of malaria at the same time that they contributed to an extension of malaria...” Their agricultural practices created conditions for the explosion of mosquitoes, exposing people living in these regions “to malarial infections” and contributing to “the movement of malarial parasites.”

In his chapter on the attempts at eradicating malaria after World War II, Packard has a chart showing countries achieving that goal: Italy, the Netherlands and the U.S. were among the imperialist countries; Grenada, Puerto Rico, and Cuba were among the island nations; and of the socialist countries in Eastern Europe, Bulgaria, Poland, Romania, Yugoslavia and Hungary succeeded. He points out that the Eastern European countries were “relatively poor but possessed reasonably well-developed health infrastructures.”

Packard doesn’t mention Vietnam, which succeeded in controlling malaria starting in 1991, when that coun-

try had nearly 2 million cases of malaria and 4,646 deaths. In 2003, among its 81 million people, Vietnam had only 37,416 cases and 50 deaths. (World Health Organization)

Vietnam used the “traditional” drug artemisinin, extracted from the indigenous Thanh Hao tree, that had been used by Chinese and Vietnamese physicians for 2,000 years. The Vietnamese also developed the industrial capability to make treated bed nets. But the most important factor in this campaign was creating village- and community-based health care networks, supported by 400 mobile outbreak teams. These local teams handled house spraying and bed-net distribution and got local communities involved in controlling malaria.

Before and especially after the White House had a summit on malaria in December 2006, foundations, governments and NGOs have poured tens of millions of dollars into malaria suppression and eradication, focused on Africa, where the most virulent form of malaria affects millions of people. Thousands of articles on malaria have been written. It is a hot topic.

Packard has a detailed analysis of the technical aspects of a number of these proposals and programs, pointing out, for example, that no vaccine has been yet developed against any parasitical disease. Since malaria has four distinct phases inside the human body, it will be especially difficult to develop a vaccine for it.

An interesting question that Packard does not raise in his analysis is why so much attention and money from major corporate-related foundations are going to controlling malaria.

One possible reason for this attention is the need to have healthy workers to extract the resources which Africa possesses in such abundance. The French imperialists learned in Panama that they couldn’t dig the canal they wanted without healthy workers.

Another possible reason is China’s current challenge to European and U.S. imperialism in Africa. The strength of this challenge became clear at the summit between the European Union (EU) and African countries held in Lisbon, Portugal, in December 2007.

African countries almost unanimously rejected the Economic Partnership Agreements with the EU because they had an alternative—China. But if the EU and the U.S. can show that they can solve a major public health problem in Africa, they might be able to entice, more likely coerce, more African countries into “partnerships.”

No progressives would disagree with Packard’s conclusion: “In the long run, the social and economic conditions that drive malaria transmission—including ... labor exploitation that places workers at risk of infection, warfare ..., population displacements ... and poverty—need to be reduced or eliminated.” But anti-imperialists would add that this goal can only be realized in the poor and oppressed countries of the Third World by putting an end to U.S. and European imperialist domination of these countries.

“The Making of a Tropical Disease” has its limitations, mainly in not drawing all the obvious conclusions from the data so ably presented, but it is well worth reading.

Go to www.workers.org to read part one of this review.



★ In the U.S.	
Bosses begin wide layoffs	1
LGBTQ youth of color organize.	3
Treatment of trans, gender-nonconforming prisoners. . .	3
Rally held for Lynne Stewart	3
Homeowners say 'Moratorium now!'	4
Campaign to stop cuts in services	4
Protest demands arrest of Cheney	4
Immigration workers vote yes for union	5
Construction workers die from racism.	5
Mumia Abu-Jamal from death row	6
Atlanta caravan protests broad array of issues.	6
Forum on reparations	6
Glenn Beck vs. WWP.	6
Movement says: 'Racist, sexist DA go away'	7
Demand pardon for Lucasville prisoners	7
'Hands off Sonny Abubadika Carson Avenue'.	7
WW 1963: Two articles on Kennedy assassination	10
50 years of Workers World saluted	10
★ Around the world	
Book review: Malaria	2
Suharto's legacy: hatchet man for U.S. imperialism	8
Pakistan: Another crisis made in USA	8
Masses protest NAFTA in Mexico	9
'Free Simón Trinidad and Sonial'	9
International news in brief.	11
Koreans honor memory of Sam Marcy	11
★ Editorials	
Super Tuesday	10
★ Noticias En Español	
Otro regalo para los ricos	12

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LGBTQ youth of color organize for community-focused development

By Darren Patrick
New York

Since its founding in 2000, Fabulous Independent Educated Radicals for Community Empowerment! (FIERCE!) has worked strenuously to create and amplify a voice for LGBTQ youth of color in New York City. FIERCE! emerged in response to acute experiences of profiling, violence and exclusion that LGBTQ youth of color continue to face.

Even in the areas of New York that pride themselves on diversity, preserving the open use of public space by LGBTQ youth of color continues to be a struggle. To address the economic, social and political realities affecting their community, FIERCE! continues to stage a variety of campaigns aimed at preserving safe space, creating political awareness and building an empowered community. Most recently, the group has mobilized to create a voice for its members in the

development of Pier 40 in New York City's Hudson River Park.

Pier 40, west of Houston Street and directly south of the Christopher Street Pier, is slated to become the commercial centerpiece of the park. The Hudson River Park Trust, which governs the implementation of the park, is under intense pressure to call upon private developers to meet operational and capital construction needs.

In August 2006, the trust issued a Request for Proposals to develop Pier 40. By November 2006, the trust had narrowed the field from four to two development schemes. The first scheme was offered by Urban Dove/Camp Group and would develop the pier with multiple uses, including a for-profit day camp. The second, offered by the Related Companies, would reconstruct Pier 40 as a performing arts complex—dubbed “Vegas on the Hudson”—that would create capital intensive uses, including a home of Cirque du

Soleil. The Related proposal sparked outrage in the community.

FIERCE!, along with other community groups, has staged an energetic campaign to counteract the influence of private development interests and offer sensible, community-led alternatives for developing Pier 40. On Jan. 31, the Hudson River Park Trust Board of Directors convened to vote on the proposals for Pier 40, which now include a third concept offered by a group of well-connected and financially-backed Greenwich Village parents. FIERCE! continued their advocacy, with an impressive showing of support for a development approach that considers the unique needs of LGBTQ youth of color. Though the meeting was not open to public comment, FIERCE! members constituted the largest single group in attendance, ensuring that their continued interest was represented before the board.

Rather than embrace or reject any of the proposals, the Board of Directors vot-

ed to delay any further action until further study is completed, remaining open to all options until the board meeting in March.

FIERCE! is developing a plan to create a LGBTQ youth community center on Pier 40. This center will acknowledge not just the unique needs of the LGBTQ youth of color, but also incredible importance of this community to building and maintaining an open, diverse and tolerant waterfront and Greenwich Village.

FIERCE! needs your support. Lend your hand to represent the needs of a vibrant and diverse community. With your help, FIERCE! can demonstrate the power and sensibility of alternatives to intense private development and entice the Hudson River Park Trust to acknowledge and serve the needs of the entire community.

The writer is a FIERCE! ally. For more information visit info@fiercenyc.org or call 646-336-6789.

Report on treatment of trans, gender-nonconforming prisoners announced

By Tyneisha Bowens
New York

The Sylvia Rivera Law Project held a release party for “It’s War in Here’: A Report on the Treatment of Transgender and Intersex People in New York State Men’s Prisons” on Jan. 31 at the Solidarity Center in New York City. The report describes in-depth the conditions that trans and gender-nonconforming folks are subjected to when incarcerated.

The event started with music while attendees danced, ate, picked up literature and sat at tables making handcrafted valentines for transgender and gender-nonconforming prisoners.

Speakers from SRLP took to the podium to talk about the development of the report and the history of the organization. “When we started SRLP, we began with a needs assessment for the trans community

in New York. ... This assessment showed needs across the board,” stated Naomi of the Feminist Collective and SRLP. “Prisoners were very left out. ... There are not many organizations that cater to the needs of LGBT prisoners, especially trans and gender-nonconforming prisoners.”

In introducing the report Gabriel Arkles, a staff attorney for SRLP, spoke on the conditions that lead trans and gender-nonconforming folks to prisons at a disproportionate rate, including disproportionate homelessness, poverty and police observation. Every person interviewed for this report had faced abuse at the hands of the prison industrial complex, including rape, sexual assault, beatings, frisks and searches, forced conformity to gender norms and denial of health care.

Trans survivors of incarceration shared their stories, bringing the reality of what trans and gender-nonconforming prison-

ers go through on a daily basis.

One trans woman described her experience in prison as “three years of hell.” As she reflected on her incarceration and the abuse that was a part of that experience she stated, “I made a mistake and I had to pay for it, but sometimes I wonder how high a price.” She went on to explain the abuses she suffered at the hands of the prison guards, which included confiscation of all “feminine” items and verbal and physical assault.

She emphasized that she is “glad to be out of prison and have gotten out with my life, but there are many trans and gender-nonconforming folks that are still incarcerated and don’t have anyone to advocate for them.”

Another trans woman, who volunteers at SRLP, spoke on her ability to defend herself during her incarceration but acknowledged that there are many who can’t.

Initiatives that took formation during the development of the report were publicized at the event. Arkles announced the formation of the SRLP Prisoner Advisory Committee, a group of incarcerated trans and gender-nonconforming folks that aid SLRP in their work and research. Kate Rude discussed the pen pal project that SRLP has for prisoners and described it as “some of the most important work we can do ... by denying forced invisibility.”

SRLP has made strides in the improvement of conditions for trans and gender-nonconforming prisoners. This report and the developments that have come from the process will aid SRLP in changing the conditions for trans and gender-nonconforming folks both in prisons and in the community.

For more information about the report and the Sylvia Rivera Law Project, visit srlp.org. □

HARLEM, N.Y.

Rally held for Lynne Stewart

By Sara Flounders
New York

A large support rally for civil rights attorney Lynne Stewart was held on Jan. 28 in Harlem, N.Y. The crowd filled St. Mary’s Church the night before she was scheduled to appear for Oral Arguments on Appeal at U.S. District Court in Manhattan.

At the rally Stewart didn’t just recap her case; she framed it in the larger struggle against political repression. Stewart demonstrated once again that she continues to identify with resistance. She asked for a moment of silence to mark the recent passing of Dr. George Habash, founder of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

The now 68-year-old Stewart was arrested six months after 9/11 after former Attorney General John Ashcroft, on the David Letterman TV show, leveled wild charges against her for aiding and abetting “terrorists.” She was part of the

defense team in 1995, along with attorneys Ramsey Clark and Abdeen Jabara, for Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman.

Her widely publicized arrest was an effort to silence and intimidate lawyers and many in the legal profession from defending the many Muslims who were being rounded up in wide government dragnets.

Stewart refused to be intimidated by the outrageous charges. She fought back, organized a defense committee and made her trial a political challenge to the Bush administration and a rallying cry for all those facing government persecution for their political ideas.

Stewart explained that her prosecution represented an assault by the government on defense lawyers who were willing to represent unpopular clients. “I did nothing wrong. I’m a lawyer. I did what lawyers should do.”

After a seven month trial she was convicted of enabling her client—the blind and disabled Sheik Rahman, who is held

Lynne Stewart and her spouse, Ralph Poynter, at Jan. 29 court hearing.

WW PHOTO: SARA FLOUNDERS



in total isolated lockdown 24 hours a day—to communicate with his followers by making a public statement, supposedly through a press release that Stewart issued on the case.

Stewart was sentenced in 2006 to 28 months and disbarred. Her translator, Mohammed Yousry, was sentenced to one year and eight months, and Ahmed Abdel Sattar, a former U.S. postal worker, was sentenced to 24 years in prison.

The Jan. 29 hearing was before the 2nd U.S. 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals, a panel of three judges, who review whether

the convictions should stand, and, if so, whether the trial judge should give new, lengthier sentences. The prosecution argued for far lengthier sentences for the three defendants.

After the hearing Lynne Stewart gave a summation of the proceedings to WBAI radio reporter Sally O’Brien. The three-judge panel could render a decision on the sentencing in weeks or in a year.

As Stewart explained, “None of us are guilty of any crime.” She described the conditions at Florence Prison in Colorado

Continued on page 5

MICHIGAN

Activists, former homeowners say ‘MORATORIUM NOW!’

By Kris Hamel
Lansing, Mich.

They were loud and angry. They demanded justice.

Victims of racist, predatory mortgages and foreclosures opened the rally at the Capitol on Jan. 29 to demand Michigan’s Gov. Jennifer Granholm declare a state of economic emergency and a moratorium to stop all foreclosures. The protesters gathered outside as Granholm prepared to deliver her annual “state of the state” address.

Doreen Bey, a Detroit resident in the process of having her home foreclosed, declared, “Unemployment, no water, all the tax departments, MichCon [gas company], mortgage foreclosures, utility companies—these are our pressures at this time. And it must stop! In order to be a great leader, the governor must help the people and remove the tyranny that’s in their hands. She must do it!” Bey led the protesters, who loudly echoed her chant, “Moratorium now!”

Sandra Hines spoke movingly to the crowd about being evicted in December, when the home that had been in her family for decades was foreclosed on. “They came and started taking out all our things. They manhandled my mother’s antique furniture and threw it out onto the curb. ... It was criminal. If it wasn’t for my nephew, we’d be homeless.”

The majority of the 125 demonstrators were African Americans who came from Detroit on a bus sponsored by the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice. MECAWI had called the demonstration to pressure Gov. Granholm to use her authority to ease the unprecedented foreclosure crisis devastat-

ing cities throughout Michigan. More than 87,000 new foreclosures were filed by lenders in Michigan in 2007, according to Realty Trac, Inc.

The protesters marched in a spirited picket line at the steps of the state Capitol building. On a powerful PA system, activists led militant chants of “No housing, no peace!” and “Housing is a right! We’re going to fight, fight, fight!”

More than 20 youth from the Lansing area, as well as students from nearby Michigan State University, participated. Speakers made links between the fight for a moratorium on foreclosures and the fight against racism and for social justice.

After an hour the protestors marched to the Central United Methodist Church for refreshments and another rally. Members of the NorthStar Center, a radical youth resistance collective, provided doughnuts. The group is starting a community campaign in Lansing for economic justice, including stopping foreclosures, evictions and utility shut-offs.

Rosendo Delgado of Latinos Unidos of Michigan told how many of the banks and corporations responsible for the foreclosure crisis are the same ones who wreaked economic destruction in Mexico and Latin America, forcing workers to come to the U.S. looking for jobs. “Our fight for social justice must include the struggle for immigrant workers and all workers fighting racism and injustice,” Delgado stated.

A legislative aide told the crowd he might lose his job because he chose “to be outside with the people instead of inside with the dignitaries” during Granholm’s speech.

Gov. Granholm did not even use the word “foreclosure” during her address. MECAWI organizers had delivered a letter



WW PHOTO: CHERYL LABASH

Rosendo Delgado from Latinos Unidos in Lansing, Mich. on Jan. 29.

to Granholm the week before, urging her to abandon her usual “fairy-tale” speeches and deal with the real crisis in the state: “It was one year ago that our organization first raised to you the critical necessity for a moratorium on foreclosures in Michigan, and pointed out to you the legal basis and precedent for you to take such action to protect the right of poor and working people to their homes. Your inaction in the face of the unprecedented crisis facing poor and working people in Michigan borders on criminality.”

Several days before the protest, a state senator informed MECAWI organizer and people’s attorney Jerry Goldberg that he had received MECAWI’s sample resolution on a moratorium and spoke to the governor about it. The senator informed him: “Gov. Granholm said it couldn’t be done. It violates the Constitution on contracts.” Goldberg told the senator that Granholm knows that isn’t true, that she

was provided Michigan statutes and case law from the U.S. Supreme Court.

MECAWI’s press release before the demonstration stated: “While Gov. Granholm has claimed that a moratorium on foreclosures would violate the contract clause of the U.S. Constitution, this is a cynical lie. ... The Michigan Moratorium Act in the 1930s was upheld by the Michigan Supreme Court. ... In that case, the U.S. Supreme Court specifically held that a moratorium on foreclosures did not violate the contract clause, because the people’s right to survive was paramount.”

Participants were uplifted and vowed to continue the struggle with direct actions to stop foreclosures. Another mass meeting will be held in Detroit on Feb. 9 at 1:00 p.m., at a location to be announced, to strategize on how to continue the fight for a moratorium. To get involved or to make a donation, call 313-319-0870 or visit www.mecawi.org. □

JERSEY CITY, N.J.

Campaign to stop cuts in services



A struggle to save essential services for a large section of the predominantly Black neighborhoods of Greenville and Bergen-Lafayette in Jersey City, N.J., gained momentum with an afternoon rally in front of City Hall on Jan. 28 to protest the cancellation of bus service to the entire area.

Community organizations are also mobilizing to stop the closing of the Greenville Hospital, the only hospital left in Ward F. The closing of the neighborhood post office was another loss to essential services in the neighborhood. These cuts will impact 100,000 of Jersey City’s poorest people.

A community meeting organized by the Communipaw Avenue Block Association at Monumental Baptist Church on Feb. 4 drew several hundred concerned residents, who met to plan further actions on Feb. 6 and 7.

—Report and photo by Sara Flounders

Protest demands impeachment, arrest of Cheney

By David Dixon
Charlotte, N.C.

A protest was held against Vice President Dick Cheney when he came to the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce (CCoC) to give a speech on Jan. 31. The demonstration took place right outside the front door of the CCoC.

The Republicans and Democrats attending Cheney’s speech were met with chants calling for Cheney’s impeachment for war crimes, spying, lying, torture and other crimes against the people.

Protesters carried an “arrest warrant” with them, proclaiming that they “might have to make a citizens’ arrest today while Cheney was in town.”

There was also a huge orange arrest warrant on display saying “Impeach Them” and a banner reading “Impeach Bush & Cheney.” Signs also called for “Healthcare Not Warfare” and “Foreclose the War Not People’s Homes.”

People from Charlotte, Salisbury, Greens-



PHOTO: DAVID DIXON

boro, Chapel Hill, Carrboro, Winston-Salem, Pinnacle and Pittsboro took part in the protest. Local Troops Out Now Coalition member group, Action Center For Justice, coordinated the protest with CODEPINK-Charlotte, Grassroots Impeachment Movement (GRIM), N.C. World Can’t Wait, as well as activists with Stop Torture Now and Amnesty International.

The Charlotte Observer, WFAE radio and several TV news stations filmed the protest. The Associated Press took a photo and posted it on Yahoo News Photos. Go to www.OperationImpeachment.org to see a video of the protest. □

Immigration workers vote yes for union

By Dante Strobino
St. Albans, Vt.

On Feb. 1 contract workers employed by Northrup Grumman at the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) in St. Albans, Vt., voted overwhelmingly to be represented by the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE). This followed on the heels of a vote the day before when contract workers employed by Choctaw Archiving at the same USCIS service center voted in UE.

These workers, almost all women, on top of not seeing a cost-of-living wage increase in over six years, had recently suffered pay cuts of \$1.70 per hour along with ineffective health insurance during the month of December and loss of five paid personal days after the new contractors took over the USCIS Vermont Service Center on Dec. 3.

This is part of a national trend to privatize public-sector jobs in order to combat higher unionization rates in this sector. The most recent Bureau of Labor statistics show that unions represent 35.9 percent of public-sector workers and only 7.5 percent of private-sector workers.

The USCIS has four service centers throughout the country, which are rewarded as political plums to senior legislators, ostensibly to bring more jobs to an area. Sen. Patrick Leahy is responsible for bringing the service center to Vermont. Workers at the California service center are employed by the same prime contractor, Stanley & Associates. They too received hefty pay cuts and a slash in benefits when Stanley took over and are also currently being organized by the UE.



PHOTO: UE

Stanley workers celebrate UE union victory in St. Albans Feb. 2.

The other two service centers, one outside Dallas, and the other in Lincoln, Neb., are currently being contracted out to SI International and are undergoing similar cuts. Until December, all four service centers were controlled by one prime contractor, but recently, in a classic move to divide and conquer, not only are there many subcontractors at each site, there are now two prime contractors, each in charge of two service centers.

Excited about the union election victory, Choctaw worker Sharon Bigelow stated, "Ever since these subcontracted jobs have been put out to the 'best bid' it has only been the big businesses that have profited from it. Each time the contract changes the workers get less and less." She continued about the drive for profits, stating, "These big companies say they

care and want to work with us. ... They only care about the multimillion dollar contracts and how much can be made."

The three-year, \$225 million contract awarded to Stanley was given on the basis that they subcontract part of the work to a small business and another small part to an oppressed-nationality-owned business, thus Choctaw Archiving and Federal Working Group.

Yet the lion's share of the booty is being kept for Stanley and Northrup Grumman, reaping the surplus value from the labor of a large majority of the contract workers in both Vermont and California. Both companies are multimillion dollar, transnational corporations run by ex-Navy and ex-Air Force brass.

Last year, CEO of Stanley & Associates, Philip Nolan, cashed in on salary, bonus

and stock options worth more than \$7 million by slashing the wages and benefits of contract workers. Stanley workers at the Vermont Service Center have finally stood up and said NO MORE!

Citing the hardship workers are facing due to the rising cost of living and the need for justice, Northrup Grumman worker Nadene Wetherby told the local newspaper, the St. Albans Messenger, "Someday soon, you will see a workers' revolution in this country if the government continues to allow big business to bully employees. We live in a state that ranks dead last in the economic scale [referring to ratio of cost of living to wages]. We face rising costs for everything—groceries, gas, home heating fuel, electricity—all of which are essential for our well-being." She continued about her efforts to unionize, stating, "We cannot tolerate the fact that multimillion dollar companies get richer while we are getting poor and working harder than ever. ... We can do something about it. There is power in numbers!"

Now that 200 of the 350 workers at the Vermont Service Center have voted in the union, workers for the prime contractor, Stanley, will be voting in a few weeks, the exact date yet to be determined by the National Labor Relations Board. Meanwhile, more than 600 workers in California are waiting their turn to vote in the union. Their election date is set for Feb. 27.

Northrup Grumman worker Laurie Gadaous comments, "As Martin Luther King Jr. stated, 'I have a dream,' of wages restored, some personal time, vacation time, 401K and all other benefits having this union will bring. We must stand united to win." □

Construction workers die from racism, neglect

By Brenda Ryan

According to preliminary data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1,226 construction workers died in the U.S. from occupational injuries in 2006. This averages out to three a day. It is one of the most dangerous professions, with 15.2 deaths per 100,000 workers. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health says only mining and agricultural work have higher death rates.

Construction deaths are labeled as accidents but in reality they are crimes of capitalism, caused by companies that do not provide workers with training and safety gear that can prevent these deaths.

This past Jan. 14, Yuriy Vanchytsky made front page headlines in New York City newspapers when he fell 42 floors off the Trump Soho Hotel. He had been tamping wet concrete into wooden molds when the molds collapsed. Witnesses reportedly said that a crane had crashed into the side of the upper floors before the accident.

On Jan. 22, a construction worker with Edison Heating and Cooling fell 30 feet

at a site in Jersey City. The radio station 1010 WINS briefly mentioned the tragedy, noting that safety authorities plan to cite the construction company for not having safety equipment on site.

It's not likely to do any good. The contractor and subcontractor of the Trump SoHo project—Bovis Lend Lease and DiFama Concrete Company—had received 11 previous building code violations.

The following week two more construction workers in Brooklyn died. On Jan. 28, Volodymr Bolehivskyy was working at a building when a one-story concrete slab snapped its cable and crushed him. Bovis Lend Lease was the site manager there as well.

And on Jan. 30, José Palacios, a construction worker in Brooklyn, fell 12 stories when the scaffolding he was standing on collapsed in strong winds. According to the New York Times, the City Department of Buildings had issued a warning to builders and contractors early that day instructing them to secure construction materials and tools or cancel work until the winds subsided. The article also noted that safety

netting was not in use at that site since the project was nearly done.

Another factor behind these deaths is racism. Many of those who die are immigrants, who face abuse and indifference from their bosses. The Associated Press reported in an Oct. 21 article that federal data from 1997 to 2006 showed there was a more than 260 percent increase in construction deaths in New York City involving Latin@s, from six in 1997 to 22 in 2006.

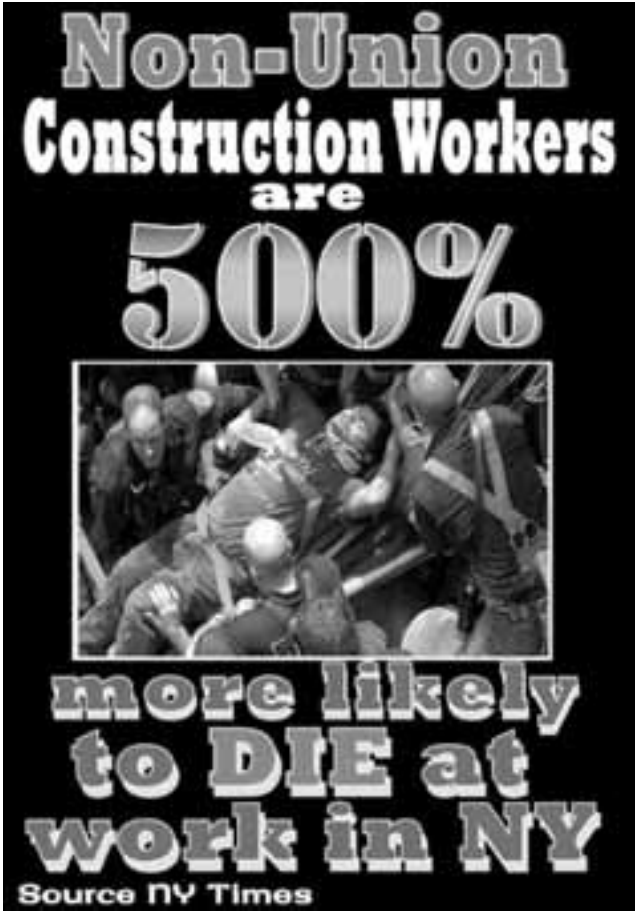
An examination of 2006 OSHA reports on New York construction fatalities illustrates "workers were more likely to die on construction jobs if they were foreign-born, Hispanic, spoke a language other than English, and worked for a nonunion crew," the AP article states. "They were also more likely to die from injuries sustained from falls."

Employers "impose modern slavery on workers," on those they describe as illegals, said El Chasqui, co-founder of Pachamama Ecuadorian Alliance. "They make us work long hours for low wages, no benefits and sometimes no pay."

El Chasqui said immigrants come to the United States because of U.S. imposed poverty in their countries and end up taking jobs they weren't trained for. The

employers do not provide the training, so workers perform jobs "based on common sense."

They face constant danger on the job, working without safety gear and being exposed to chemicals and contaminants. "Every day, every hour we have this kind of situation," said El Chasqui, who is an electrician. "People have their hands cut off, their legs broken. They can't pay their medical bills. Sometimes they have to get up and go to work because their families depend on them." □



Rally held for Lynne Stewart

Continued from page 3

where Stewart's co-defendant Ahmed Sattar and Rahman are held.

Florence is a supermax prison where prisoners are tortured by repressive techniques of highly refined sensory deprivation and total isolation. Stewart explained that the lack of human contact is so extreme that even food is delivered by mechanized means.

She also took the time to repeat a warning to political activists and especially to Muslims who continue to be targeted with government visits and harassment. "You have an absolute right to refuse to talk to government officials without a lawyer present. The government is not there to help. They are not visiting you to be nice. They have an agenda. Protect yourself." □

Mumia Abu-Jamal from death row

America's Martin & Martin's America'

From a Jan. 11 message played at a rally following the Jan. 21 Martin Luther King march against racism in front of the CNN/Time Warner building in New York.

As millions of people ready themselves for a (hopefully) paid holiday in remembrance of assassinated civil rights leader, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., we are forced to come to grips with who the man was, rather than who he has been projected to be.

In the words of noted historian (and once King's close confidant) Vincent Harding, "America has largely chosen the path of amnesia rather than true remembrance of the man. It appears as if the price for the first nationalist holiday honoring a Black man is the development of a massive case of national amnesia concerning who that Black man really was.

"At both personal and collective levels, of course, it is often the case that amnesia is not ultimately harmful to the patient. However, in this case, it is very dangerous, for the things we have chosen to forget about King (and about ourselves) constitute some of the most hopeful possibilities and resources for our magnificent and very needy nation.

"Indeed, I would suggest that we Americans have chosen amnesia rather than continue King's painful, uncharted, and often disruptive struggle toward a more perfect union. I would also suggest that those of us who are historians and citizens have a special responsibility to challenge the loss of memory, in ourselves and others, to allow our skills in probing the past to become resources for healing and for hope.

"In other words, [if] Martin King cannot challenge those who make him a harmless Black icon, then we surely can raise such a challenge—assuming that we are still alive." (Martin Luther King: The Inconvenient Hero, 1998, Orbis Books)

What distinguishes the life and work of King towards his latter days was his dedication to Black poor folks, a group that seems to be all but forgotten in the years since his passing.

While today's America seems to be on the brink of electing a Black person (or at least possibly nominating one), the plight of the Black poor could hardly be more perilous.

For it is on them that the twin weights of poverty and state repression are dropped, with little relief from a civil rights leadership which occasionally seems overwhelmed with the threats and conflicts facing those of better means and resources.

Indeed, much of that leadership is, as was Dr. King himself, quite highly educated, and seeking entree into the highest levels of state and corporate power; levels virtually impenetrable to millions of Black poor folks.

For them is reserved the worst of public education; the worst housing; brutal treatment by cops; ignored by political leaders (at least until election time rolls around); highest rates of joblessness; the highest incarceration rates—we know this list can go on and on.

King Day may be remembered, but the man behind the name is fast disappearing.

It is virtually forgotten that he sacrificed his life on behalf of striking garbage men, Black workers who wanted a decent wage to be sure, but also wanted simple, human dignity.

In 1967, one year before his assassination, a perceptive journalist, the late David Halberstam, wrote in Harper's magazine his impressions: "King has decided to represent the ghettos, he will work in them and speak for them. But their voice is harsh and alienated. If King is to speak for them truly, then his voice must reflect theirs; it, too, must be alienated, and it is likely to be increasingly at odds with American society."

America establishes a holiday, and promptly forgets what he lived for.

From death row, this is Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Go to www.prisonradio.org to hear Mumia's audio messages.



Atlanta caravan protests broad array of issues

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta

On Jan. 26, the streets of downtown Atlanta were the backdrop for a creative "march on wheels" as decorated flatbed trucks filled with chanting, drum-beating, sign-waving people of all ages and various communities across Georgia brought a message of struggle against poverty, racism, war and injustice. The eight-mile route encompassed sites of ruling-class power and popular opposition.

Led by a horse and buggy and filled out with buses, vans, cars and bicycles, the "people's resistance" parade traveled by the Atlanta Detention Center, where shouts of "Tear down the walls!" filled the chilly air; passed by Grady Hospital, whose mission to care for the poor and underinsured is being subverted by privatization; and rolled by high-rise, superexpensive condominium buildings, chanting "Money for housing, not for war!" to onlooking construction workers.

As the caravan came to the Atlanta Housing Authority building, public

housing tenants, homeless families and their advocates joined in with a decorated bus. The Task Force for the Homeless had held a "reverse eviction," piling mattresses, furniture and other household goods on the lawn of the building and tacking a notice on the door denouncing the actions of the AHA to destroy public housing projects throughout Atlanta despite the woeful lack of affordable housing for low-income families.

Approaching the Georgia State Capitol, reproductive justice activists welcomed the caravan riders with the sound of pounding drums and exuberant cheers. Giant ballots were brought onto the Capitol Plaza where the hundreds of participants spray painted handprints to signify their support for health care for all, living wages, affordable housing, equality, immigrant rights, peace and environmental justice, among other demands.

This dynamic expression was organized by a broad coalition initiated by Georgia Citizens Coalition on Hunger and the Up and Out of Poverty Now! Coalition, which for 28 years has orga-

nized a Poor People's Day at the Capitol to give voice to the issues impacting poor and working people in Georgia.

In recognition of Atlanta's role in hosting the first U.S. Social Forum in 2007 and in response to the World Social Forum call for a Global Day of Action Against Injustice on Jan. 26, the Poor People's Movement Caravan and Assembly was the result of a collective effort months in the planning. The organizers also noted that 2008 is the 40th anniversary of the Poor People's March for economic justice in Washington, D.C., that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was leading when he was assassinated on April 4, 1968.

The day ended with a People's Assembly where antiwar activists, public housing tenants, high school and college students, unemployed and low-wage workers, union members, Grady Hospital patients and staff, children, community organizers, religious leaders, advocates for women's, lesbian, gay, bi, trans and immigrant rights, and many other elements of the progressive movement came together to discuss strategy and plan joint actions. □

BROOKLYN, N.Y.

Forum on reparations

A Reparations Now Forum was held on Feb. 1 at Sistas' Place Coffee House in Brooklyn, N.Y. The meeting focused on a report back on the 7th session of the United Nations Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, held at the U.N. Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, Switzerland, in January.

The key issue on the agenda was organizing regional, national and international preparatory conferences to follow up on the World Conference against Racism held in Durban, South Africa, in 2001, called "The Durban Review."

Human rights attorney Roger Wareham, who led a delegation from the December 12th Movement International Secretariat at the session, gave a report back from the session.

In addition, Monica Moorehead, a managing editor of Workers World newspaper, discussed the book "Marxism, Reparations, and the Black Freedom Struggle" that she edited last

year. The book analyzes the reparations movement in the broader context of social movement at home and abroad. Following the meeting, she signed copies of the book.

—Report & photos by Amadi Ajamu

Roger Wareham, right;
Below, Monica Moorehead signs books.



Glenn Beck vs. WWP

By Caleb Maupin

Glenn Beck is a right-winger and propagandist for the rich and powerful. His radio program is broadcast over 260 radio stations and he has a nightly "news" program on CNN.

He called Che Guevara a "cold-blooded killer." He wants Mumia Abu-Jamal to die. He says the John Birch Society, whose founding document accused the civil rights movement of "making trouble in the South," is "making more and more sense."

He called for Barack Obama to change his name to Osama bin Laden. He has compared the global warming awareness movement to Nazism. He says the people of New Orleans chose to die.

He is truly a disgusting character.

On Jan. 9 he talked about Democratic candidate John Edwards. Beck is outraged that Edwards has been appealing to workers by saying, "It's the very

rich against everybody else."

Of course, Citigroup, the Fortress Investment Group, Goldman-Sachs and other ruling class firms have been funding the Edwards campaign. That should tell us something about Edwards. But even mouthing populist demagoguery is too much for Glenn Beck.

Glenn Beck proclaimed, "I listened to him [Edwards] last night give a speech, and, I mean, why not just start wearing the Soviet star on your head and the Workers World Party?"

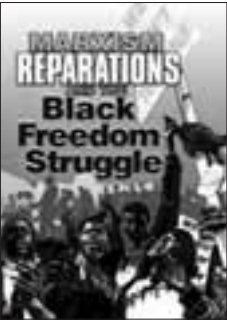
So Workers World Party is the incarnation of what Glenn Beck, a modern-day McCarthyite, fears the most. What a compliment. □

Marxism, Reparations & the Black Freedom Struggle

A new book with following articles:

- Black liberation & the working-class struggle
- The material basis for reparations in the U.S.
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- Why fight-back is inevitable
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Order online from www.Leftbooks.com



GRAPHIC: SAHU BARRON

HOUSTON

Movement says: ‘Racist, sexist DA, go away’

By Gloria Rubac
Houston

A broad movement is building in Houston calling for the removal of not only the Harris County district attorney but his whole senior staff as well. Hundreds of demonstrators rallied in front of the criminal courthouse here on Jan. 31 calling on District Attorney Chuck Rosenthal to resign immediately.

Speaker after speaker denounced the racist, sexist and pornographic photos and videos found in e-mails on the district attorney’s work computer that have come to light in the last month.

One offensive e-mail showed a Black man lying in a street with an empty bucket of fried chicken, a watermelon and a soda next to him. It was called “Overdosed.” Other e-mails showed women in public places having their clothes ripped off their bodies.

The district attorney exchanged some of these e-mails with the spouse of prosecutor Kelly Siegler, chief of the Special Crimes Bureau.

Siegler recently came under fire for excluding a juror in the trial of activist and political prisoner Howard Guidry.

She said she objected to the potential juror because of the church he attended, but information revealed that the African-American man was a member of the NAACP and this was the real reason he was struck. While Siegler apologized to his church for calling them “nuts and screwballs,” she has yet to apologize to the NAACP.

Standing on the front steps of the courthouse, Deric Muhammad of the Millions More Movement told the crowd, “We have a systemic problem. It is not just Rosenthal that has to go—the whole toilet must be flushed.”

Stephanie Connor, through her tears, told the protesters, “My brother had new evidence in his case but no court would hear it. He was innocent and his execution killed my momma shortly before my brother was put to death. I lost two people because of the injustice going on here in Harris County.” Stephanie’s brother, Johnny Connor, was executed on Aug. 22, making history for being the 400th person the state of Texas has executed since the death penalty was reinstated in 1976.

Other speakers included Brother Quannell X, New Black Panther Nation; Minister Robert Muhammad, Nation of

Islam Mosque #45; Ovide Duncantell, Black Heritage Society; Sister Jean Dember, National Black United Front; Jolanda Jones and Peter Brown, Houston City Councilpersons; and Deloyd Parker, S.H.A.P.E. Community Center.

After the rally, the militant crowd marched to the federal courthouse, where Rosenthal was in court facing a contempt charge because he had deleted e-mails that the federal judge had told him to produce for the court. Hundreds of protesters sat in court for the afternoon, filling the courtroom.

The criminal justice system in Harris County, Texas, in the country’s fourth-largest city (Houston), is as racist and as corrupt as they come in the United States.

Rosenthal has lost his credibility, not only with a vast number of people, but even with his Republican Party, which asked him not to run for re-election this year. He is now facing six months in jail for deleting e-mails, is being investigated by the Texas attorney general for using a work computer to promote his re-election campaign and could be removed from his job due to public outrage.

The Coalition for Social Justice is meet-

ing weekly, holding town hall meetings and appearing on TV and radio shows. They have plans to tackle the lack of a public defender system in Harris County. They are filing petitions with the Justice Department for Rosenthal’s immediate removal. They are asking the U.S. Congress’ Judiciary Committee to hold a hearing in Houston to examine its criminal justice system. And they are planning more public protests.

The Coalition includes pastors and politicians, as well as organizations like the Millions More Movement, the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement, the New Black Panther Nation, the Harris County Green Party, the Nation of Islam Mosque #45, the Houston Peace and Justice Center and the Black Heritage Society.

The majority working with this new coalition, however, are grass-roots people who have never before been involved in activism. Many have family members who have been victimized by the courts or falsely imprisoned.

As Pastor D. Z. Cofield told a recent meeting, “We are in this for the long haul. We are serious about making systemic changes in Harris County. Join us!” □

Nationwide call demands Ohio’s governor pardon Lucasville prisoners

By Sharon Danann

Supporters of amnesty for the prisoners wrongfully convicted in connection with the 1993 Lucasville prison rebellion are calling for a National Unity Day of Action on Feb. 4. Prisoners throughout Ohio and other states are writing to Ohio’s Gov. Ted Strickland to demand that he overturn those convictions. Supporters from around the country and the world will be flooding Gov. Strickland’s office with calls, faxes, e-mails and letters demanding pardons for these prisoners whose convictions were based on nothing but perjured testimony.

In addition to the Lucasville 5 on death row, there are at least 25 other prisoners with sentences up to life. Many of these prisoners were convicted on trumped-up

charges simply because they would not testify falsely against their fellow prisoners in the ways the prosecution wanted them to. For their integrity, they have paid with almost 15 years in solitary confinement. Enough is enough!

Those who want to express their indignation about this injustice are asked to call Gov. Strickland at 614-466-3555, e-mail him at governor.ohio.gov, fax him a letter at 614-466-9354 or write to him at Riffe Center, 30th Floor, 77 South High Street, Columbus, OH 43215-6108.

Bomani Shakur (Keith LaMar), one of the Lucasville 5, sent the following statement from death row in support of the National Unity Day of Action, which was read at a Martin Luther King celebration on Jan. 19.

“Dear Brothers and Sisters:

“It is with much pride and confidence that I cast my lot with you, all of you, on this day. In the past few years, we have seen a general upswing of oppression and injustice around the world with virtually no unified force of resistance to match and/or defeat the onslaught of overwhelming violence. But the tide is most definitely turning in our favor, and I think we should be most encouraged that ‘The People’ are once again speaking in a collective voice against the establishment.

“As a recent article by Staughton Lynd suggests, this seemingly immovable mountain of injustice does move, and I truly believe that all we have to do is keep reaching across the walls that separate us and, one by one, do our level best to tear them down. This is my hope as we gather here today; that we come together

and speak as one collective voice against those who have set themselves up as the rulers of the world. Let each of us, in our various spheres of influence, issue a resounding NO against the status quo and resolve, right here and now, to stay unified in our efforts and determination to see a better future for those who are behind us in life. Let us, right here and now, in the spirit of George Jackson, Malcolm X, John Brown, Huey Newton, Rosa Parks, Harriet Tubman, and all the other fallen brothers and sisters who gave up their life for the people; let us make a “love vow” and promise to love ‘The People’ over our petty possessions and differences. Divided is how they rule us, so let us come together and stay together in unity.

“In Solidarity, Bomani Shakur” □

‘HANDS OFF Sonny Abubadika Carson Avenue’

Activists rallied in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn, N.Y., on Feb. 2 for another street-naming ceremony for the late Black activist, Sonny Abubadika Carson. The action was called by the December 12th Movement, founded by Carson and others in the late 1980s.

Last May 30, a resolution initiated by Black City Councilmember Al Vann on behalf of the people who signed petitions supporting a street-renaming campaign for Carson—a nationalist—was defeated by the white-majority City Council led by Christine Quinn. Viola Plummer, a D12 leader, was illegally removed from her position as chief of staff for progressive Black City Councilperson Charles Barron. Plummer is suing Quinn for her racist action.

Last June 16, Black activists and their supporters put up their own street sign honoring Carson. In an arrogant display, city officials recently had the sign removed. The ongoing battle, involving the right to self-determination, to rename Gates Avenue to Sonny Abubadika Carson Avenue continued on Feb. 2 when the sign was restored to its rightful place.

Go to www.workers.org to read more on this development.

—Monica Moorehead

WW PHOTO: ANNE PRUDEN



Suharto's legacy: hatchet man for U.S. imperialism

By Deirdre Griswold

Suharto—the Indonesian general who took power in a 1965 coup, massacred the left in his country and a decade later invaded and annexed East Timor—has died. His death has been the occasion for some admissions in the imperialist media about Washington's support for his bloody military rule.

Of course, it couldn't be concealed. It was common knowledge.

In 1965 and 1966, while Suharto's army was hunting down Communists and left nationalists and either murdering them on the spot or sending them to concentration camps, numerous editorials and articles appeared in the New York Times and the Washington Post that basically said his methods were harsh but, all in all, it was a plus for Washington, a bright spot compared to the war in Vietnam.

It is sad, but perhaps not surprising, that even today, when CIA documents have been made public confirming the U.S. role behind Suharto's bloody coup, and it has been acknowledged that the U.S. intelligence agency handed over to the right-wing generals lists of Indonesian Communists to kill, the liberal and even social democratic media here have nothing to say in defense of the million or so Indonesians who were slaughtered in this horrendous bloodbath. They note that it happened and then move on.

The PKI, the Indonesian Communist Party, bore the brunt of the pro-imperialist offensive that brought that vast country completely under the sway of Western corporations. Who were they and what had they accomplished before being crushed by the military coup?

The PKI, before the 1965 coup, was the largest communist party in the world outside the Soviet Union and People's China. It was estimated to have 3 million members and to have built up mass organizations that encompassed another 15 to 20 million Indonesians.



Anti-Suharto protest, Jakarta, Indonesia, this past Jan. 25, 2008.

It was responsible for organizing Indonesian workers into a national union federation. These unions carried out many strikes and other struggles, both during the period of Dutch and Japanese colonial rule and also after Holland finally recognized Indonesia's independence in 1949.

It was the seizure of Dutch-owned plants by these unions in 1957 that finally led the government of independence leader Sukarno to nationalize foreign-owned businesses. It also prompted the first U.S.-supported attempt by the military to overthrow Sukarno, in February 1958.

That one failed, but in 1965 General Suharto's successful coup crushed the unions and opened up Indonesia to the wildest exploitation by imperialist corporations—with a generous commission for himself and his cronies, of course. Many progressives in the West know that Indonesia's magnificent hardwoods have been cut down for lumber at an alarming rate in recent decades, turning rainforests into deserts and destroying whole ecosystems. They know about the impact on climate change.

But what do they know about the bloody political reversal in Indonesia that made this wanton profiteering possible? Do they realize that the organized working class there, led by the PKI, had been a barrier preventing the wholesale rip-off of Indonesia's natural resources?

Besides the millions in unions, many more millions of Indonesians were in progressive mass organizations representing women, peasants, youth and intellectuals—all organized by the PKI.

The PKI had survived Dutch and Japanese colonial rule. It had been outlawed for much of its existence and had to work underground. Its guerrillas had been crucial in the armed struggle for independence against the Dutch. It had lost thousands of cadres and many leaders over the years in repressive crackdowns. But always it had grown stronger—until the bloodbath of 1965-66.

Rivers 'clogged with bodies'

There were few accounts in the U.S. media about what was going on. A notable exception—and one showing that the information was available—was a Time magazine article on Dec. 17, 1965, that captured the extent of the horror:

"Communists, red sympathizers and their families are being massacred by the thousands. Backlands army units are reported to have executed thousands of Communists after interrogation in remote jails. ... The killings have been on such a scale that the disposal of the corpses has created a serious sanitation problem in East Java and Northern Sumatra where the humid air bears the reek of decaying flesh. Travelers from those areas tell of small rivers and streams that have been literally clogged with bodies."

As the months passed, estimates of the number of dead rose to 600,000 (The Guardian, April 7, 1966) and then a million. But the major capitalist newspapers let their readers know it was all okay. A column in the June 19, 1966, New York Times by editorial board member James Reston spoke of "the savage transformation of Indonesia from a pro-Chinese policy under Sukarno to a defiantly anti-Communist policy under Suharto."

"Washington is careful not to claim any credit for this change in the sixth most populous and one of the richest nations in the world," continued Reston, "but this does not mean that Washington had nothing to do with it." The column was entitled "A Gleam of Light in Asia."

Many years later, independent journalist Kathy Kadane was able to interview a CIA official who actually bragged of the agency's role in these ghastly events.

Since then, Western corporations have sucked up billions in profits from Indonesia's oil, copper, rubber, hardwoods and other rich resources, and today exploit millions of workers and displaced peasants there in low-paying manufacturing and assembly plants.

Ten years after the coup, and immediately after President Gerald Ford and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger had enjoyed a state visit with Suharto, Indonesia sent its U.S.-armed troops to East Timor in a massive land grab that resulted in the deaths of an estimated third of the population of that small country.

Sudisman, one of the five top leaders of the PKI, was captured, tortured, put on trial in 1967 and later executed by the Suharto regime. He was asked by the judge if he "repented." In his final speech, after reviewing errors he said had been made by the party, he added, "Out of respect for my communist beliefs, my communist responsibility, and solidarity with my dead comrades, Aidit, Lukman, Njoto and Sakirman, I have come to my decision.

"I do not repent.

"Moreover, aware that other victims have fallen, I as a Communist cannot do less than they.

"We live to fight and we fight to live. We do not live just for the sake of living. We live to defend life valiantly, to the death. ... Long live the Indonesian Communist Party!"

Griswold is author of the book "Indonesia: Second Greatest Crime of the Century," which is available from leftbooks.com.

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Pakistan: Another crisis made in USA

By Sara Flounders

The internal crisis wrenching Pakistan today cannot be separated from the impact of decades of U.S. military aid and continuing intervention to support military dictatorship there.

Washington has actively supported political repression, including martial law, suspension of civil liberties, the detention of many thousands of lawyers, trade unionists and political activists and a growing number of "disappeared."

Billions of dollars in U.S. military aid have encouraged corruption on a vast scale at all levels of the military and political parties. It has distorted the civilian institutions, led to political fragmentation and impoverished the country. U.S. intervention has exacerbated ethnic and religious divisions and strife.

For decades Washington has made generous funds available for police and intelligence agencies while infrastructure development, education, health and other social needs have been neglected. Pakistan is more than \$40 billion in debt, much of it for U.S. military equipment. A few powerful land-owning families still hold the greatest share of wealth.

Military aid underdevelops Pakistan

A few statistics from UNICEF give the picture. Thirty percent of children are chronically malnourished and lack safe water and household sanitation, especially in rural areas. Pakistan spends less than 2.5 percent of its GDP on education. Only half of the 19 million children of primary school age are enrolled in school. Two-thirds of women are illiterate.

Pakistan is the sixth most populous country in the world with one of the largest Muslim populations. It has rich reserves of oil and natural gas. It has coal and iron deposits along with deepwater ports.

It has a large and militant trade union movement and an organized peasant movement.

Austerity measures imposed by the International Monetary Fund have resulted in currency devaluations and drastic cuts in already meager social services. To pay on its \$40 billion national debt, Pakistan was forced by the IMF to sell off its most profitable state-owned enterprises, including the oil and gas facilities, to foreign capital.

The billions of dollars in military aid and the growing militarization of the

Pakistani state have served U.S. foreign policy objectives and corporate interests against the Soviet Union, China, India and Iran. This aid has made Pakistan a center of military and covert intelligence operations.

The Pentagon sees Pakistan as a strategic crossroads in South Asia. It borders the Middle East, Central Asia and former Soviet republics and touches on China's western frontier.

Just since 2001, Washington has injected \$10 billion in military aid, distorting the political fabric of Pakistan. The Washington Post announced the day before the assassination of Benazir Bhutto last December that the U.S. was planning to send additional Special Forces to Pakistan to operate as "trainers" on its Afghanistan border. It also was selling F-16 jets, 700 surface-to-air missiles and surveillance planes to the regime of Gen. Pervez Musharraf.

Rising anti-U.S. sentiment

U.S. military intervention is so linked to dictatorship and repression that a deep current of anti-U.S. sentiment exists in Pakistan today. Even Musharraf makes a point of not appearing to be too compliant to U.S. dictates. There is reportedly deep

suspicion of U.S. motives within the ranks of the Pakistani military and the feared ISI—the intelligence organization.

Since Sept. 11, 2001, the military aid and deepening U.S. involvement in Pakistan have been justified as part of Washington's "war on terror." But the U.S. buildup of the Pakistani military did not begin in 2001

Pakistan has been a major client state since the days of the Cold War. It was an essential part of the SEATO and CENTO alliances that encircled the Soviet Union.

In that period elected civilian governments were short-lived. They were soon overthrown by the military, who got instant diplomatic recognition and aid from Washington.

In the 60 years since independence, Pakistan has had only 14 years of democratic government.

A pawn in the cold war

In 1977, with immediate U.S. support and encouragement, the popularly elected government of President Ali Bhutto was overthrown in a coup headed by Gen. Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq. Bhutto was executed by the military in 1979.

This was followed a year later by

Continued on page 9

Masses protest NAFTA in Mexico

By Teresa Gutierrez

Tens of thousands of peasants and farmers converged from all over Mexico with their tractorcades, motorcades and other vehicles on Mexico City on Jan. 31. They were joined by labor activists from prominent militant unions in a tremendous show of unity between workers in the cities and the fields. Their demand: Repeal the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

With this action, the Mexican peasants highlight a worldwide phenomenon that you will never hear described in the vicious diatribes of right-wing pundits like Lou Dobbs or the Republican candidates who attempt to scapegoat immigrants for society's ills. More than 180 million workers around the planet have been forced out of their homelands in the recent period as a result of capitalist economic policies in one of the biggest mass migrations in human history.

This forced migration is cruel and torturous. People leaving their countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America risk life and limb in search of a livelihood. The superrich in the imperialist centers have used their cheap expendable labor to build up capitalism, the very system whose politicians campaign to deport migrants in record numbers.

As in an earlier epoch of capitalist growth with the genocidal and barbaric slave trade—that resulted in the massacre of tens of millions of Africans—laborers today are also treated as disposable commodities.

What is causing the unprecedented migration of workers from oppressed countries to economically dominant capitalist countries?

President Bill Clinton signed NAFTA into law in December 1993 and forced millions of Mexican workers and peasants off their lands, over the border and into the U.S.

Crossing that border—with or without

the launching of a covert CIA war in Afghanistan against a popular, anti-feudal government. This CIA operation was in full swing months before Soviet intervention and assistance to Afghanistan began.

Throughout the 1980s the CIA used the ISI, the Pakistani intelligence service, to organize the very forces that the U.S. now wants the Pakistani military to crush in the border areas with Afghanistan.

Washington has consistently chosen to support dictatorships in Pakistan even though the political leaders of the opposition, like the assassinated Benazir Bhutto, a multi-billionaire, are bourgeois and have ties to U.S. and British imperialism.

The constant coups and years of military rule have been aimed at repressing militant mass movements and resistance movements among oppressed national minorities, especially in the provinces of Waziristan and Balochistan.

Since Musharraf's declaration of a state of emergency in November, the country has been in political turmoil. The regime is now discredited and internally divided. U.S. efforts to hastily cobble together a coalition of the dictatorship and the Bhutto forces ended with Bhutto's assassination.

Washington's solution is only more of the same. As in Iraq and Afghanistan, its latest schemes are to force Pakistan to accept U.S. forces and more military equipment.

In the long run such measures will be no more successful than the debacle Washington is facing in Iraq and Afghanistan. □

documents—is nothing new for Mexican workers, who have a centuries-old relation with the Mexican/U.S. border. But NAFTA has heightened and intensified the Mexican people's dire situation.

From day one, Mexicans have protested NAFTA. The primarily Indigenous Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) burst into the world political scene exactly on Jan. 1, 1994, the very day NAFTA was to be put in practice in Mexico, precisely to protest the agreement.

A major point of struggle in Mexico against NAFTA had been an amendment to a key and progressive article in the Mexican Constitution, Article 27. This article was won in the Mexican Revolution of 1910 and forbade the sale of communal peasant lands called "ejidos." The U.S. imperialist success adding the amendment ushered in a nightmare for Mexican peasants.

Today the struggle against NAFTA not only continues—it is escalating.

'Without corn, there is no homeland'

A major slogan of this burgeoning people's movement that met Jan. 2 to call the Jan. 31 action is, "Sin maíz, no hay país" (Without corn, there is no homeland). The peasant groups, all members of the National Dialogue, demanded that the Mexican Congress as well as the Mexican Permanent and Agrarian Commissions repeal NAFTA.

The statement representing hundreds of groups reads in part: "During the 14 years of NAFTA, unemployment, immigration, the destruction of our agricultural activities, the concentration of resources into a few hands, the deterioration of purchasing power and wages, and extreme poverty have increased in an alarming manner."

A Mexican institute in August 2007 noted that: "Mexico has more than 6.4 million unemployed people, which represents 13 percent of the 49.35 million Mexicans of working age. During the six years of the presidency of Vicente Fox, 3.26 million people emigrated—that is, 500,000 on average per year."

The statement continues: "According to statistics in October 2004, an estimated 1.5 percent of the total population of the country control about one-third of the total value of goods and services" and



Mexico City, Jan. 31.

"The poorest families survive on 86 pesos a day, while the richest receive 1,296 pesos per day."

The peasant organization also demands that NAFTA be replaced by a new model, one that "is based on respect and develops social ownership of the land and which provides a larger federal budget to aid the poor" and middle-income peasants.

It demands that "sovereignty and food self-sufficiency be the goals of the national transformation of the economy, because without corn and beans, there is no country."

Another revolutionary demand is "to avoid the proliferation of GMO's (genetically modified organisms), which are bad for our health." Mexican farmers are documenting that homegrown seeds are beginning to disappear. Farmers are forced to use hybrid seeds which come from imperialist corporations such as Monsanto (U.S.) and Bayer (Germany). The plants grown from these seeds do not produce new seeds, furthering dependence on these corporations.

"The fields can take no more," says one of the slogans in the protests.

Speaking at an anti-NAFTA rally, Lucha Castro, a prominent attorney and women's activist, charged, "NAFTA and related government policies are responsible for expelling five million people from Mexico's countryside. Merely 2 percent of Mexico's agricultural production units benefit from the treaty, while 80 percent of Mexican farm exports are controlled by foreign capital.

"To compete with the U.S. all these years, the forests and soils have been devastated, and our aquifers have been over-exploited," Castro continued. "Mexican consumers haven't benefited from better prices. In 1994, you could buy 20 kilos of tortillas and eight kilos of beans

with a minimum wage salary. Nowadays, you can only buy six kilos of tortillas and three kilos of beans."

Movement against NAFTA gathers force

These dire circumstances are arousing a militant fight back. A major newspaper in northern Mexico, Frontera Norte-Sur, writes that NAFTA is awakening "the ghost of Pancho Villa," a leader of the Mexican Revolution, especially in northern Mexico.

On Jan. 18, on a frigid morning, workers and peasants from

the Francisco Villa Campesino Resistance Movement (MRCFV) gathered in Ciudad Juárez to begin a tractorcade to Mexico City. The low temperatures had caused deaths from hypothermia and carbon monoxide poisoning, according to Frontera Norte-Sur.

The MRCFV was demanding that the Mexican government renegotiate NAFTA under the banner "No Corn! No Country National Campaign!"

The tractorcade followed the same route that Pancho Villa used on his march to Mexico City in 1914 and would meet up with other protesters on Jan. 31 in Mexico City.

One of the veteran leaders of the movement told the press that "the aging tractors on the motorcade are the cream of the crop in a countryside where oxen and mules still leave grooves in the land." So very different from U.S. agribusiness.

Opposition to NAFTA continued to grow. Elected officials from both major parties backed the movement's call. State legislatures approved resolutions in support of the demands. Several prominent bishops have signed on to the campaign. Peasant organizations that initially approved NAFTA now demand revisions.

Farmers from various states have brought charges that NAFTA violates the Mexican Constitution, which may force the Mexican Supreme Court to review NAFTA's constitutionality.

The movement that marched Jan. 31 has announced that its next action will be to make their way into the Mexican Congress and block the chambers on Feb. 7.

Fourteen years of NAFTA-based hardship have forced Mexican people to cross the border. But their continuing struggle shows that repression breeds resistance, and that imperialist decrees like NAFTA can and must be repealed and defeated. □

U.S. activists say: 'Free Simón Trinidad & Sonia!'

On Jan. 28, Simón Trinidad, peace negotiator of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-Popular Army, was sentenced in a United States federal court to an unprecedented 60 years in prison. This trial had been, from the very beginning, an attempt by both U.S. and Colombian governments to further demonize and penalize the Colombian insurgency.

The International Action Center participated, along with other groups, in a press conference in front of the Washington, D.C., federal court where the hearing was to be held later that morning.

The following is the IAC statement that was read in English and Spanish and was broadcast by Telesur and Colombian media.

A humanitarian exchange is the road for the start of negotiations between the Colombian government and the insurgency, which could lead to the road to peace that the people of Colombia demand and deserve.

Simón Trinidad and Sonia should be part of this exchange and the United States govern-

ment, for a change, should ally with the forces that want to bring peace.

Unfortunately, the U.S. government supports, encourages and aids the parts that want war at the cost of millions of lives of Colombians. Let us not forget that it was the U.S. government ... who gave the idea and the order for the formation of the criminal paramilitaries back in 1962, under the Kennedy administration, when U.S. Commander General Yarborough of the Special Warfare Center led a team to Colombia.

In his report to the Joint Chiefs of Staff he wrote: "[A] concerted country team effort should be made now to select civilian and military personnel for clandestine training in resistance operations in case they are needed later. This should be done with a view toward development of a civil and military structure for exploitation in the event the Colombian internal security system deteriorates further. This structure should be used to pressure toward reforms known to be needed, perform counter-agent and counter-propaganda functions and

as necessary execute paramilitary, sabotage and/or terrorist activities against known communist proponents. It should be backed by the United States."

In 1991, under the Bush Senior administration, the U.S. State Department put Colombian President Álvaro Uribe as number 82 on the list of drug traffickers, listing him as a drug trafficker and assassin, friend of Pablo Escobar. However, now he is the U.S.'s closest ally in Latin America. This is criminal hypocrisy on the part of the government, meant only to satisfy its own self-interests in the region now that the peoples of Latin America are determined to not be a neocolony or the "backyard" of the United States.

We call on all people who love justice and peace to oppose the criminal U.S. policy against Colombia and demand that Simón Trinidad and Sonia be freed and be included in the humanitarian exchange that Senator Piedad Córdoba and Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez have so successfully initiated. □



Super Tuesday

The Stock Market didn't seem to know it was Super Tuesday. Traders focused their attention instead on news that nonmanufacturing business declined in January to its lowest level since October 2001. The Dow Jones industrial average fell 370 points, its biggest daily plunge in nearly a year.

Popular interest in the capitalist elections is at its highest in decades. Revulsion against seven years of brutal Bush-gang rule has focused popular attention on the Democrats. And the unprecedented contest between Hillary Rodham Clinton and Barack Obama has brought almost as much attention to Super Tuesday as there was to the Sunday's Super Bowl two days earlier. Facing all this, the market drop was like a cold shower of reality. The economic crisis will confront the working class no matter who wins these contests. And only a mass popular struggle stands a chance of moving the weight of that crisis off the backs of working people—of all nationalities, genders and races.

That latter thought should be firmly in the minds of working-class activists as they adjust to an election that it now appears will confront left organizations and individuals with challenges that go far beyond those thrown up by the usual presidential election: one between two more or less conservative white men, who ooze the utmost insensitivity if not outright racism, sexism, homophobia, and who have run for and been elected president for the more than 200 years of U.S. capitalist history.

Not that any essential class questions have changed because a woman or a Black man might for the first time become president. The Democratic Party and Republican Party are still the parties of the super-rich ruling class and serve these interests, including waging imperialist wars and attacking workers' and oppressed people's rights. No one running has indicated through their history or even their campaign rhetoric that he or she would try to do otherwise than to serve these same interests.

Super Tuesday's results bear out the early indications from Iowa and New Hampshire. In most states, especially the more populous states like California, New York, Illinois and Georgia, twice as many people voted in the Democratic primaries as in the Republican. The

population in general is fed up with Bush. Clinton's crowds are enthusiastic. Obama's crowds are even more enthusiastic and larger and younger than Clinton's. While winning more than 80 percent of Black voters, Obama is running nearly even with Clinton in delegates in what is now a tight contest.

Increasing this election's complications is that while a woman or a Black man might be elected president, both can't be, and the corporate media uses this contradiction and Democratic Party infighting to pit African American people against white women, two oppressed groups with many common interests. It is noteworthy that the same corporate media have blanked out the "third party" candidacy of former Rep. Cynthia McKinney, who not only is an African-American woman, but has a program supporting the struggle for Black rights and women's rights, anti-war and pro-worker and in solidarity with immigrants.

Also, when the Democratic candidates have said something progressive—for example, when Obama condemned the scapegoating of undocumented immigrants—he got thunderous applause from his large and enthusiastic audience. This also happens when either Obama or Clinton criticize Bush's launching of the Iraq war, or speak of the hardships imposed by foreclosures or unemployment.

Young people in the U.S. most often have their first political experience not on a protest demonstration or a strike but in a presidential election. This election—and especially if Obama is nominated—has the potential of drawing millions of youths into political life. For the left this raises a danger whose other face is a possible opportunity.

These youth may well be drawn into the dead end of supporting the Democratic Party. But at a time of economic recession, this increase in electoral political activity might also lead to a potential for taking independent direct actions on absolutely essential issues: to stop foreclosures, to demand jobs and increased unemployment benefits, to fight for universal health care, to pull the troops out of Iraq and Afghanistan and to fight for the rights of African Americans, immigrants, women and LGBT people in the U.S. It is a time to stay alert. □

50 years of Workers World saluted

In recognition of Workers World Newspaper's 50th year of publication, the staff of the Axis of Logic E-Zine (axisoflogic.com) writes:

"Over the years, Workers World Party has consistently worked for the workers, social justice and economic equality. They have remained true to the principles of the Communist Manifesto and thus advanced the gifts left to humanity by Marx, Lenin and Trotsky.

"Their work has also had a center-focus on organizing vital action in the streets of the U.S. against imperialism, capitalism and war. ... All those engaged in today's fight against the 'war on terror' executed by the world's most powerful terrorists

are indebted to our brothers and sisters in the Workers World Party.

"Axis of Logic editors and writers extend our thanks and congratulations to each of you. ... You have been a source of education, inspiration and courage for others who engage the enemy of the people. You have contributed greatly to Axis of Logic as we continue our quest to 'find clarity in the 21st century mediaplex.'"

The commendation, available in full on their Web site, is high praise coming from a group that is active in the anti-imperialist struggle, participating in and writing on struggles in the United States and Latin America.

—LeiLani Dowell

WW 1963: Two articles on Kennedy assassination

Editor's note: Workers World is in its 50th year of publication. Here are excerpts from two articles originally published in Volume 4. The first, which appeared in the issue dated Nov. 29, 1963, was actually written on Nov. 26—four days after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. The second, on the role of the Warren Commission, appeared in the following issue, dated Dec. 6, 1963. The full text of these articles can be found at workers.org.

Behind the assassination

The United States of America came close to a fascist coup d'état and the establishment of a right-wing, reactionary, totalitarian dictatorship.

This is really the main and fundamental fact to emerge from the assassination of President Kennedy.

That the coup d'état did not actually come off can only be explained by the fact that the forces of political reaction, virulent racism and "preventive war" militarism had failed to coalesce at the critical moment and emerge with "a man on horse-back." ...

They are not yet ready to come forward, but the "national disaster" to which they have been hopefully looking forward for a long time is now an accomplished fact. ...

Beyond the shadow of a doubt, the scheme of the conspirators is based on the classical experience of the Nazi takeover—the Reichstag fire—which Hitler prepared and utilized to smash the Weimar Republic, and erect his totalitarian regime. The Reichstag fire created the atmosphere of national emergency and disaster. It was called the work of a "communist agent." But this was proven to be a monstrous fabrication. ...

Aside from any and all considerations of the guilt or innocence of Oswald, his brutal treatment at the hands of the Dallas authorities is in the classical spirit of fascist terror.

"A man is presumed innocent until proven guilty by a jury of his peers." This has been regarded as one of the most elementary democratic rights in this capitalist democracy. ...

[T]his basic right of the accused was summarily eliminated just at the moment when it was most urgently needed to prove the alleged existence of democratic rights. The accused, however, was tried and convicted by the press, radio and TV, all of whom acted in varying degrees as accomplices of the Dallas police and the forces of neo-fascist reaction behind them.

Ultra-rightist plot premature

But the ultra-rightist plot for a governmental takeover proved to be premature.

Deep as are the antagonisms within the ruling class over questions of policy, they have not yet matured to the extent where the most substantial section of the capitalist class and the banker-generals who rule on their behalf was ready to dispense with the façade of bourgeois democracy and throw in its lot with a totalitarian dictatorship.

The role of the Warren Commission

Kennedy is dead. Oswald is dead. A new president promises to carry on and pursue the policies of his predecessor. But the forces of political reaction, virulent racism, "preventive war" militarism, which failed to combine at the critical moment to erect the totalitarian dictatorship, give only the appearance of being cowed. Actually they remain intact and intransigent. ...

[S]oon the eyes of the world will be focused on the seven-member lily-white commission headed by Chief Justice [Earl] Warren.

It is exceptionally important that the progressive-minded people of the country and of the world be adequately apprised both of the nature as well as the composition of the panel which has been appointed by President Johnson. ...

Rare indeed are historical examples in which significant political institutions or commissions rise above their narrow class interests and social background.

How, for instance, can such a political personage as Senator [Richard] Russell from Georgia, who represents poisonous racism, big business privileges, and unbridled militarism, rise above his class and racial prejudice and become impartial?

How, too, can John J. McCloy rise above his class connections as former chairman of the Chase-Manhattan Bank, as well as top administrator of the cold war policy of the Dulles-Eisenhower administration which he served?

How can Allen Dulles, one of the principal conspirators of the Cuban invasion and the monstrous war-provoking U-2 incident, be impartial in examining a plot like this?

And is Senator [John Sherman] Cooper of Kentucky and Representative [Hale] Boggs of Louisiana, or Representative [Gerald] Ford of Michigan—all servile tools of big business interests—capable of rising above their class interests, business connections and race prejudice?

The people must be warned that the judgment of the commission will not be decided by considerations of abstract justice. [It] will be based on the relationship of forces both nationally and internationally. It will be based, also, on the impact of intervening events, and the ability of the mass of the people, the labor movement and the liberation struggle, to act as an obstruction to the gathering forces of neo-fascism, and as a support for the preservation of democratic rights and civil liberties.

Implied admission of conspiracy

The very convocation of such an extraordinary commission is in itself an implied admission of the existence of a conspiracy of the ultra-right and fascist forces which hoped through the assassination to achieve a coup. To establish the guilt or innocence of merely an individual it should not be necessary to convoke such an extraordinary panel. This could easily be accomplished by lesser investigative

Continued on page 11



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INTERNATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

By John Catalinotto

IRAQ

Will Mosul be another Fallujah?

U.S. and Iraqi forces are deploying in large numbers to Mosul, the third-largest city in Iraq and capital of the Nineveh province on the border with Syria and one with a large Kurdish population. The U.S. and Iraqi puppet forces, including 20,000 police, number 45,000 in the province. (McClatchy Tribune, Feb. 2) U.S. troops drive Humvees through deserted areas of Mosul, and five were killed in an explosion on Jan. 28.

The Nineveh campaign is part of what the U.S. calls Operation Phantom Phoenix, a U.S. project allegedly to eliminate al-Qaida and other “extremist” forces but really a genocidal project aimed at destroying the Iraqi resistance that has stalled the U.S. occupation for nearly five years now. This offensive poses a serious threat to the general population, whether they are civilians or armed resisters.

According to Al-Jazeera (Feb. 3), U.S. commanders in northern Iraq have said the battle to oust them from Mosul will be a grinding campaign that will require both the Pentagon and Iraqi allies to use more firepower and risk more troops. Merchants in Mosul report that residents are stocking up on food and fuel. Everyone is fearful that the U.S./Iraqi puppet offensive will not only kill many people as it did in Fallujah but will unleash chaos in the city, as it has in other areas of Iraq.

PALESTINE/GALILEE

‘Israeli Arabs’ protest police whitewash

More than 20,000 people marched Feb. 1 in Sakhnin in Palestine to protest the decision of Israeli Attorney General Menachem Mazuz earlier in the week not to indict any police officers involved in the deaths of 13 Arab civilians during the October 2000 uprising in that city in solidarity with what became known as the second Intifada. The protest participants, who were overwhelmingly Palestinian

The role of the Warren Commission

Continued from page 10
and judicial processes.

To constitute such a broad committee makes it evident that it has a *political* task. That it in effect will pass on the degree to which the remnants of bourgeois democracy will continue in the U.S. and whether it is willing and capable to stand as a bulwark against a fascist conspiracy.

A whitewash would pave the way for a fascist dictatorship. The greatest danger, however, lies in the capitulation by the commission to the rightist hysteria, which would implicate the progressive, militant, and anti-fascist forces in the U.S. in a monstrous frameup.

The FBI has, according to latest press dispatches, submitted a report on Oswald indicating not only that they consider him guilty, but also that they believe he carried out the assassination of President Kennedy without accomplices.

From this it would appear to follow that no foundation is being laid for the construction of a frame-up against the left. But let us not be deceived by appearances.

A more cogent reason for their report that Oswald was guilty and a “loner” is to bar the way to an investigation of the fact that the assassination was part of a *rightist* plot with many accomplices. □

Arabs living within the pre-June 1967 boundaries of the Israeli state, carried 13 mock coffins with the pictures and names of the victims.

PALESTINE/GAZA

Relief convoy stopped at border

On Jan. 26, some 1,500 people traveled as a convoy from all over the Israeli state to the Erez junction border with Gaza in an attempt to bring much needed supplies to the Palestinians of Gaza, who had been under a murderous siege they partially broke with a mass action tearing down the wall on the Egyptian border on Jan. 22. Participants held a rally of Jewish and Palestinian activists inside of the Israeli state at Erez and a parallel rally of Palestinians inside of Gaza. The actions were held by the Palestinian International Campaign to End the Siege on Gaza and about 20 different Israeli organizations. In the convoy were three tons of food and other supplies meant for Gaza. As of Feb. 4, the Israeli military had still not let the relief convoy through.

PUERTO RICO

On verge of teachers’ strike

The teachers and workers of Puerto Rico are preparing for a strike in defense of free and excellent public education and in favor of the right to strike and to have an independent union with democratic representation. In January, the Puerto Rican government decertified the Federation of Teachers of Puerto Rico (FMPR) as the exclusive representative of the 42,000 teachers. An Assembly of Delegates of the FMPR in September 2007 recommended a strike action that was approved unanimously by 7,000 teachers in a general assembly a month later. Since teachers’ strikes are illegal, the colonial government is trying to use this vote to destroy the union. Law 45, forbidding teachers’ strikes, is similar to the Taylor Law of New York State, and is now being challenged by the union in the courts as unconstitutional.

FMPR leader Rafael Feliciano called for negotiations with the government and at the same time, while surrounded by representatives of the Broad Front—organizations that support the union—that the FMPR is prepared to go out on strike. “The number of strike committees that we have managed to organize all over the island has surpassed expectations,” said Feliciano.

SERBIA

Narrow victory for pro-West president

Despite material aid for his campaign from Western imperialist powers and heavy threats of isolating Serbia if he lost, the pro-Western candidate for president, incumbent Boris Tadic, got only 50.5 percent of a two-way vote against Tomislav Nikolic of the Serbian Radical Party, a nationalist party favoring closer ties to Russia. Analyst Cathrin Schuetz reports from Belgrade that besides the warnings from the European Union of Serbian “isolation,” there was a threat that if Nikolic won the right-wing regime in Kosovo province would immediately declare secession. She also notes that this is the first time since President Slobodan Milosevic was thrown out of Serbia’s leadership by a coup in 2000 that such a large proportion of people in Serbia voted against the pro-Western parties and that this is a sign of the coming struggle there.

GERMANY

Electoral shift leftward

German voters in two western German states showed their dissatisfaction with the neo-liberal regime governing Germany and voted decidedly to the left of their 2003 vote. The new Left Party (a coalition of the former Party of Democratic Socialism from eastern Germany and a left split led by Oscar Lafontaine from the Social Democratic Party, and supported by smaller left tendencies) showed for the first time that pro-socialist representatives could break through the 5-percent barrier and win representatives in the West. The Left Party got 5.1 percent of the vote in Hesse (Frankfort) and 7.1 percent in Lower Saxony (Hannover).

The two major pro-capitalist parties—the rightist Christian Democrats (CDU), which lost the most votes, and the centrist Social Democrats (SD)—are in a CDU-led “grand coalition” running the national government. The two parties have been carrying out anti-worker cutbacks of pensions, unemployment insurance and health care and sending German youths to participate in an unpopular imperialist war against Afghanistan. While it is unclear what exact direction the Left Party will take, the leftward vote is a measure of discontent among the German workers.

GERMANY/AFGHANISTAN

Solidarity with U.S. resisters in Mannheim prison

Three GIs, Andrew Hegerty, Jeffrey Gauntt and James Blanks, all members of the 173rd Airborne and all of whom refused deployment to Afghanistan, have been confined in Mannheim Prison in Germany since last fall. In solidarity with these war resisters, the German anti-war movement has launched a countrywide solidarity campaign to send the three resisters postcards and letters. The 173rd Airborne is presently deployed to Afghanistan and previously fought in Iraq. The division has its headquarters in Vicenza, Italy, the site of massive anti-war demonstrations protesting expansion

of the base, and has units in Schweinfurt and in Bamberg, Germany. Hegerty, 19 years old, who is receiving a dishonorable discharge for his honorable action, had told the officers who put him on trial, “I’m not really able to pull the trigger and shoot anyone.”

To write to any of these GIs, address the letter or postcard to their name with the additional address: Unit 29723, Box LL, APO, AE 09028-9723, USA. For more information, look for the article on “Solidarity campaign for GI resisters in German prison” posted Jan. 30 at couragetoresist.org.

ITALY

Center-left government falls

For its 20-plus months of existence, the center-left government led by Premier Romano Prodi has carried out a program that included increasing the pension age for workers, building camps to detain undocumented immigrant workers, sending Italian troops on imperialist adventures in Afghanistan and Lebanon, increasing the military budget, and allowing the U.S. to expand the military base in Vicenza (see brief on U.S. troops in Germany).

Prodi’s government was able to pass these reactionary measures with the votes of 150 left delegates and senators. The left parties, including the Party of Communist Refoundation (PRC) and the Communist Party of Italy (PCI), argued that to abandon the Prodi government would allow the return of ultraright-wing billionaire media magnate Silvio Berlusconi to power in Italy. In January, a tiny centrist party called UDEUR with three senators decided to break with the Prodi government over a minor political issue—its leader, a cabinet member, had been charged with corruption—and the Prodi government fell. Elections are set for April.

While the parliamentary situation looks bleak, there have been massive workers’ demonstrations and powerful anti-war demonstrations opposing the anti-worker policies and militarism that shows there is still extraparlimentary mass resistance to the reactionary course in Italy. □

Koreans honor memory of WWP leader, Sam Marcy

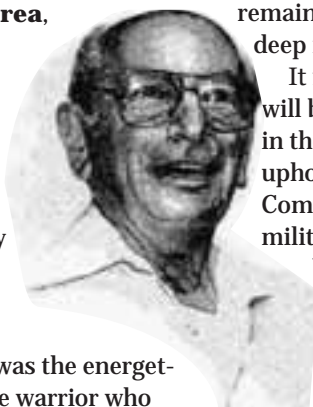
On Feb. 1, 1998, Sam Marcy, a founding member and chairperson of Workers World Party, passed away. Marcy had supported the Korean struggle for socialism and self-determination ever since its revolution; he had led a Party delegation to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and met its legendary leader, Kim Il Sung. The following statement was sent to the National Committee of WWP this Jan. 3 from Pyongyang, DPRK, and acknowledged by Pak Gil Yon, Permanent Representative and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the DPRK U.N. Mission in New York.

The Central Committee of the Workers’ Party of Korea, with all the members of your Party, pays high homage in memory of Comrade Sam Marcy, late Chairman of the National Committee of the Workers World Party on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of his passing away.

Comrade Sam Marcy was the energetic leader and indomitable warrior who sacrificed his whole life to the struggle for the socialist cause and peace against imperialism. The achievements he made

by leading the Workers World Party remain cherished with his name deep in the mind of all of us. It is our firm belief that there will be greater success in the future in the struggle of your Party which upholds invariably the wish of Comrade Sam Marcy and the militant and friendly relations between our two Parties which support and stand in solidarity with each other will further strengthen and develop in the years to come.

**Central Committee
Workers’ Party of Korea
Pyongyang**



Otro regalo del Congreso y la Casa Blanca para los ricos

Desemplead@s y pobres son ignorad@s en el plan de estímulo

Por Gary Wilson

El plan “de estímulo económico” acordado por l@s demócratas en el Congreso y por la Casa Blanca de Bush, es otro regalo para los ricos.

Hay sólo un mini pago de entre \$300 y \$600 para quienes estén emplead@s. Esa no es una cantidad significativa si se considera que el alquiler promedio de un apartamento en Estados Unidos es de \$1027 al mes. (Business Week, 17 de enero)

Si usted no tiene trabajo, no recibirá pago; se requiere un ingreso mínimo anual de \$6000 para obtener tal pago. L@s desemplead@s ni siquiera reciben una extensión de beneficios por desempleo, que generalmente agregan 16 semanas más de pagos o cupones de alimentos. Agregando esos beneficios al plan, hubiera puesto miles de dólares en los bolsillos de la gente que más lo necesita.

A diferencia de este reembolso de una sola vez, el cual no se dará por varios meses, una extensión de los beneficios por desempleo y un aumento en los cupones de alimentos sí pondría dinero en la economía inmediatamente. El plan original propuesto por la Cámara de Representantes incluía una extensión en los beneficios por desempleo y un aumento en los fondos para cupones de alimentos para los 35 millones de hogares de bajo ingreso que fuesen elegibles para los pagos. En una declaración que desafía la lógica, la demócrata Nancy Pelosi afirmó que los demócratas estuvieron de acuerdo con Bush en eliminar esos beneficios del plan original para poder ayudar a la “clase media”. (New York Times, 24 de enero)

El plan de “estímulo” incluye además más de \$50 mil millones de dólares en rebajas de impuestos para los negocios.

El pago mini y la rebaja de impuestos para las empresas han recibido la mayor parte de la publicidad. Pero ninguno de estos es en realidad el punto más importante en el paquete. Lo más significativo es el rescate de los bancos y de las compañías hipotecarias y la garantía de préstamos inmobiliarios para los ricos.

Los detalles de esta parte del plan no se encuentran ni en las declaraciones de la Casa Blanca ni en el resumen del plan detallado por los demócratas; la realidad del plan se encuentra en las páginas financieras de la prensa.

“El plan trata de hacer más fácil el asegurar o refinanciar las hipotecas de las viviendas más caras. Primero permitiría a las agencias Fannie Mae y Freddie Mac comprar préstamos de hasta \$729.750 por el periodo de un año. El límite actual es de \$417.000. El paquete similarmente incrementaría el límite de \$362.790 en préstamos asegurados por la Administración Federal de Viviendas, mientras facilita la cualificación de los prestatarios,” reportó el noticiero

USA Today en su sección de economía el 24 de enero.

El reporte añade que el plan también traslada el “riesgo” de los financiamientos de los préstamos más caros hacia l@s trabajador@s, cuyos impuestos se utilizarán ahora para asegurar los préstamos de las propiedades más caras.

El plan fue falsamente llamado un estímulo para que pasara rápidamente por el Congreso sin más revisiones. Pero ¿es realmente posible que cualquier plan pueda estimular y poner un alto a la decreciente espiral económica?

Peligros del estímulo militar

El ciclo capitalista actual comenzó su ascenso después de la caída en la bolsa de valores de 2002, conocida frecuentemente como la ruptura de la burbuja del Internet. EEUU estaba en una recesión; la economía estaba estancada sin ninguna salida a la vista. El reforzamiento militar masivo que comenzó entonces, con un valor estimado en más de \$2 millones de millones durante los últimos cinco años, fue un estímulo enorme.

Pero un estímulo militar no es igual a la producción capitalista normal. La expansión militar de ninguna manera garantiza una recuperación económica con empleo pleno. De hecho, su expansión puede resultar en una profundización de la crisis y efectivamente, puede ser deprimente para la economía.

El alza capitalista cíclica que comenzó después de la caída del 2002, ha sido una de las recuperaciones más débiles en la historia. Con frecuencia se ha descrito como la recuperación sin trabajos, lo cual significa que mientras los ricos recuperaron las ganancias, no hubo un aumento en empleos que de ordinario acompaña una economía en alza. La tasa de desempleo no aumentó pero tampoco hubo un aumento de trabajos como de ordinario ocurre en una recuperación.

Ahora la tasa de desempleo está comenzando a subir. La cifra oficial, que deliberadamente subestima los niveles de desempleo, en diciembre mostró un incremento significativo de un 5 por ciento.

“Un alza de tal magnitud (0,3 por ciento en diciembre)”, dice el Instituto de Política Económica,

“históricamente ha sido un síntoma o una señal de que se está aproximando una recesión. Además, el incremento en el desempleo no estuvo aislado en un sólo sector —el nivel de desempleo subió notablemente en todos los grupos demográficos”. (www.epi.org)

En una recesión, lo primero que ocurre es que la gente pierde su trabajo; el ejército de reserva de trabajador@s desemplead@s aumenta. La duración y la profundidad de la recesión determinan la severidad del desempleo, el aumento de personas sin techo y la pérdida de comida.

Para la clase trabajadora —la parte de la población que sufre más los efectos de una recesión— lo más importante es tener un trabajo. Para los capitalistas, la única cuestión son las ganancias. Los planes del gobierno para dar un “estímulo” a la economía tienen la meta de restaurar las ganancias.

Para cualquier persona que no sea rica, lo que se necesita es un plan de rescate —la garantía de un empleo, no desahucios o ejecuciones hipotecarias, y suficiente comida. Cualquier plan que no se enfoque en trabajos, viviendas y comida no está respondiendo a la verdadera crisis.

Crisis de sobreproducción

Una recesión es el resultado generalmente de lo que Carlos Marx llamó una crisis capitalista de sobreproducción. La sobreproducción capitalista no está bien entendida, en parte porque los capitalistas quieren ocultar las causas de las recesiones y la miseria que conllevan.

Una crisis de sobreproducción ocurre cuando los capitalistas, en su búsqueda por más ganancias, tratan de conseguir una posición ventajosa en el mercado bajando el costo de producción de cada artículo. Esto se hace más frecuentemente introduciendo tecnologías avanzadas que economizan el trabajo haciendo que se puedan fabricar más productos al mismo o más bajo costo. Los capitalistas están forzados a acumular constantemente nuevas maquinarias y nuevas tecnologías para poder competir con otros capitalistas.

Cada capitalista trata de superar a los otros revolucionando los medios de producción y bajando el precio

de cada producto — ya sean computadoras, ropa, o maíz. Pero eventualmente la tecnología se hace la norma y muchos productos más son producidos por menos trabajador@s. Esta crisis de sobreproducción entonces se revela como la inhabilidad de vender a una tasa aceptable de ganancias, todo lo que ha sido producido. Esto va seguido de bancarrotas, despidos, y cierre de fábricas.

Marx demostró que todo valor nuevo surge de la aplicación directa de la fuerza de trabajo en el proceso de producción. A diferencia de las materias primas, equipo y fábrica, la fuerza de trabajo es la única mercancía que, en el transcurso de ser utilizada en el proceso de producción, crea el nuevo valor.

Este carácter dual de la fuerza de trabajo—que l@s trabajador@s solo reciben los sueldos suficientes para sostenerles como clase, mientras producen mucho más que eso en valor nuevo—es la base de la explotación y de las inmensas ganancias que usurpan los capitalistas.

Marx también explicó el porqué la tasa de ganancias cae mientras la proporción de inversión en maquinarias y tecnología—que Marx llama capital constante—sigue subiendo en relación a los sueldos, o capital variable. El capital variable es la fuente de las ganancias, pero se hace una parte mínima de la inversión total.

La sobreproducción de capital, para Marx, es la sobre-acumulación de capital constante.

Cuando la sobre-acumulación se enraíza y caen las tasas de ganancias, los capitalistas empiezan a mover los fondos de inversión a su disposición, de la maquinaria, la tecnología y la mano de obra, hacia bienes financieros. Eventualmente habrá una escasez de mercados provechosos para inversiones financieras.

Cuando eso sucede, los inversionistas capitalistas frecuentemente compiten para subir los precios de varios bienes sociales sin incrementar la verdadera riqueza de la sociedad o expandir la productividad. La crisis de los préstamos e hipotecas que tienen una tasa de interés que sube sin control es precisamente tal esquema, agravado por créditos fáciles.

La depresión económica que ahora está ocurriendo no puede ser prevenida por actos del Congreso. Aparte de acabar con el capitalismo, no hay otro medio de impedir tales desastres económicos. Pero Marx sí mostró que l@s trabajador@s, a través de la lucha, pueden disminuir el impacto devastador de tales crisis sobre su vida y lograr también la consciencia y organización para empezar a desafiar al sistema en sí mismo. □

Free the Cuban Five—
Fernando González,
Ramón Labañino,
Antonio Guerrero,
Gerardo Hernández
and René González.

